

CHAPTER FOUR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

The economic development element provides an inventory and evaluation of a community's economic base, labor force characteristics, local economic development opportunities and resources. Analysis of this information can determine how economic sectors are growing or declining and identify those sectors that should be targeted for development in order to complement or diversify the local economic base. Assessments are also made to determine the compatibility of available jobs and wage levels versus the skills, education levels and commuting patterns of area residents. These analyses, in coordination with other Plan elements, can help identify the issues and opportunities that must be addressed so that local economic development resources can be maximized in fostering the type of economic development desired.

Regional Context

As discussed in the Population Element (Chapter 1), Hart County lies within one of the fastest growing areas of the United States. Abundant water, recreation opportunities, picturesque scenery, and the high quality of life enjoyed by Hart County residents all contribute in attracting new industry to the county. The County's location at the intersection of I-85 and Georgia State Highway 77 is a prime for economic growth due to the accessibility to and from several major metropolitan cities. Atlanta, GA is approximately 100 miles southwest from the new Gateway Industrial Park at this key intersection, while Birmingham (AL), Chattanooga (TN), Charlotte (NC), Greenville (SC) and Savannah (GA) are just some of the major cities between 45 and 250 miles of Hartwell (see Map 4.1).

Map 4-1: Hart County Regional Context/ Interstate 85 Corridor



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4.1 Economic Base

Economic base analyses are used to identify the local significance of each industrial sector by examining the employment and wages paid by various industrial sectors. Economic base studies can direct recruitment toward businesses that compliment existing industry or require the skills of residents currently exporting labor to other regions. This information is basic, but vital, for more effective decisions concerning the health of the local economy.

The primary measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the number of people it employs. An economy grows stronger as it increases any form of gainful employment in the local population, redistributing wealth and encouraging economic growth.

Table 4-1: Employment by Industry Sector

Category	Hart County			2000			
	1980	1990	2000	Franklin	Elbert	Madison	Georgia
<i>Total Employed Civilian Population</i>	7,682	9,091	10,409	9,007	8,733	12,498	3,839,756
Manufacturing	49.2%	43.9%	30.5%	25.4%	30.4%	19.6%	14.8%
Educational, health and social services	10.5%	11.4%	16.5%	17.8%	16.8%	19.0%	17.6%
Retail Trade	11.5%	13.2%	10.5%	12.1%	11.5%	11.9%	12.0%
Construction	7.5%	6.1%	8.0%	8.0%	6.5%	11.4%	7.9%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	3.5%	0.5%	5.5%	6.4%	4.7%	4.6%	7.1%
Other Services	2.1%	5.6%	5.3%	4.1%	4.4%	6.1%	4.7%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	2.9%	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%	4.0%	4.9%	6.0%
Agri., Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	3.8%	4.9%	4.4%	4.9%	3.7%	3.1%	1.4%
Prof., scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	2.1%	2.6%	3.8%	3.9%	3.6%	5.2%	9.4%
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	2.4%	2.2%	3.4%	4.6%	2.9%	3.8%	6.5%
Public Administration	2.3%	2.8%	3.4%	3.8%	5.0%	4.0%	5.0%
Wholesale Trade	2.3%	2.3%	2.1%	3.0%	5.2%	4.8%	3.9%
Information	-	-	1.8%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	3.5%

Source: US Census Bureau

Similar to the conclusions made within the 1995 Hart County Comprehensive Plan, county labor force participants are still majority blue collar despite a continual decrease in the margin between blue and white-collar workers. Especially when compared to the State and the nation. Employment opportunities in the service sector should continue to increase with an increase in the retirement population as well as the increased tourism due to the lake. Hart County had in 1990 three to four times the percentage of total workers in precision production occupations than did the state and nation and continues to have a significantly higher percentage in 2000. Overall however it appears Hart County's economy has made some transition to a service base like those for the nation and State.

Once the most dominant aspect of local employment, Hart County has experienced a steady decline in manufacturing related employment since 1970. However, this trend is typical of national conditions and mirrors those of neighboring communities. It does bear monitoring that

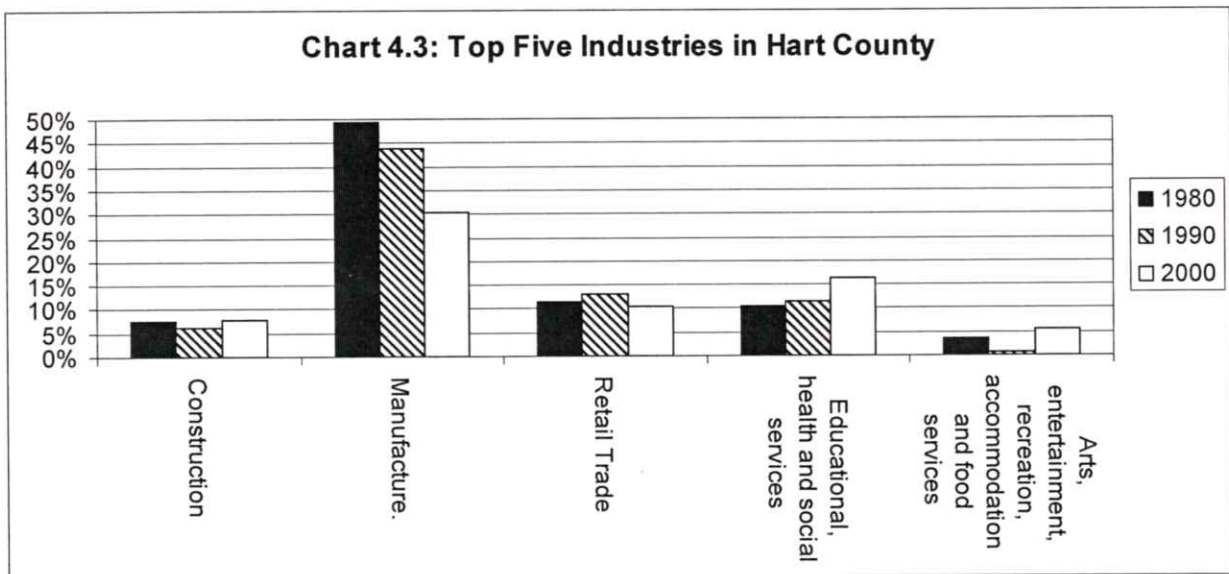
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Hart County remains reliant on manufacturing such that greater than 30% of the employment base lies within this sector, compared to 14.8% statewide. This alone doesn't imply concern but does suggest local officials monitor the economic vitality of the manufacturing businesses within the County. Should this trend continue it may suggest the County must reevaluate economic development programs and directions, as well as examine trends in wages for other industrial sectors to ensure quality employment options for county residents.

The other note taken from this data is those industry sectors where Hart County may be lacking employment opportunities compared to other communities. Compared to neighboring counties, the volume of Hart County employment that remains within the manufacturing sector appears to be at the expense of the Education and Health Services and Wholesale and Retail Trade sectors. The differences in the trade industries could be considered positive if wages remain high, as those sectors often feature employment at lower wage levels. This could also indicate a shortage of retail commerce within Hart County, as well as a shortage of service industry professionals for education and health care. If consumer opportunities in those sectors are considered inadequate this data would confirm that it might be due to an overall lack of appropriate local businesses.

The fastest growing segments of the economy have been in educational, health, and social services (despite strong growth) as well as arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. Retail trade and service employment has increased significantly for Hart County's working residents over the past two decades



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Earned Wages

A second measure of an industry's value to a local economy is the amount of earnings produced and then distributed among the employees as weekly wages. These are funds brought into the local economy and are indicative of an industry's financial investment in the community. Industries that can support higher wages yield more disposable income that can be reinvested elsewhere in the local economy. By contrast, industries with lower wages can become liabilities by leaving households dependent on additional sources of income.

Table 4-2: Weekly Wages

	2000		2005			
	Hart	Hart	Elbert	Franklin	Madison	Georgia
Avg. – All Industries	\$501	\$541	\$510	\$534	\$507	\$752
Total – All industries	\$3,969,924	\$3,678,259	\$3,604,680	\$4,152,384	\$1,904,799	\$2.96B
(% of Total Wages)						
Total Government	13.0%	18.2%	22.6%	13.4%	32.1%	15.5%
Total Goods Producing	*56.0%	42.9%	45.0%	38.0%	34.7%	18.5%
Total Service Producing	*31.0%	38.8%	32.3%	48.6%	33.0%	65.9%
Select Goods Producing						
Manufacturing	52.4%	35.6%	38.9%	31.2%	18.5%	12.4%
Construction		5.8%	2.2%	4.4%	14.8%	5.4%
Agri., Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	0.4%	0.3%	0.8%		0.7%	0.4%
Select Service Producing						
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	6.1%		1.3%	10.2%	2.5%	4.2%
Educational, health and social services		9.6%	4.9%	10.0%	4.6%	8.8%
Other Services		8.4%	2.0%	6.4%	7.4%	9.4%
Retail Trade	7.4%	7.2%	6.6%	9.6%	7.3%	7.4%
Information		3.0%	1.1%	0.3%	1.0%	4.9%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2.2%	2.6%	3.3%	2.3%	3.4%	6.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services		2.3%	2.2%	2.8%	1.4%	3.1%
Wholesale Trade	1.7%	2.1%	9.6%	4.6%	1.7%	8.1%
Public Administration		2.0%	0.2%	1.4%	1.1%	5.2%
Prof., scientific, management, administrative, and waste mgmt. services		1.5%	1.0%	0.9%	2.7%	8.1%

Source: Georgia County Guide 2007

* = GMRDC Estimate

A review of the wage rates paid by various industrial sectors reinforces the value of the Manufacturing businesses. Even as that sector's share of employment decreases the wage levels offered are comparably high and thus responsible for a great deal of income for Hart County residents.

Compared to other communities Hart County appears balanced in terms of economic diversity. Overall Goods Production remains the strongest economic generator within Hart County, to a

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greater degree than the State average and most neighboring counties. Many figures in Table 4-2 are on par with those for the State, with most differences accounted for when adjusting for differences between Hart County's rural nature and metropolitan Atlanta's influence on Georgia's overall numbers. As with employment figures Hart County exhibits low wage earnings for the Professional, Scientific, Management and Waste Management sector, but this is expected given the area's rural character and sparse population.

It is evident the county is progressing towards a service based economy, however, in light of the strong increase in earnings distributed by the Government and Service sectors. While not close to those numbers for the State, which are anchored by volumes of white-collar professionals, Hart County's Service industries are responsible for almost as much of the County's total earned wages as the Goods Producing industries. The downside to this is that those Service industries also account for a higher percentage share of the total employment (47.3% to 34.4% in 2005), meaning the average wages paid through those industries was most likely lower. This is also evidenced in the County's total wages, which has decreased between 2000 and 2005 despite an increase in the number of employed civilians.

Lower wages do not necessarily equate to poorer economic conditions, but more often than not that is the general case. Lower wage levels force households to seek out cheaper lifestyles and/or feature 2nd or 3rd wage earners. The trend must be monitored to ensure the wage levels remain high enough to provide area household with financial security plus disposable income to spur further economic growth within the community. Thus, it's in Hart County's best interest to pursue industries that feature higher wage levels than currently offered.

Average wages, the number of establishments, number of jobs, and rank in the State is shown in Table 4-3. The number of establishments has grown 30% in ten years however the number of jobs has only grown 2%, indicating the types of jobs created have been with small businesses. This could be a positive indicator in that larger employers are prone to yielding undue influence on the local economy: One large employer cutting massive amounts of jobs has a large impact on the unemployment rate and financial health of area households. Conversely, smaller businesses generally indicate a more diversified and flexible economy.

Table 4-3: Overall Wage Data - Hart County

Wages	Establishments	Jobs	Avg. Yearly Wage*	Rank (in Ga.)
1993	340	6,907	\$24,177	55
1994	346	6,725	\$25,101	49
1995	354	6,575	\$26,015	40
1996	359	6,531	\$24,763	60
1997	370	6,615	\$26,200	47
1998	370	7,018	\$27,435	44
1999	396	7,574	\$27,567	46
2000	410	7,923	\$27,874	38
2001	418	7,561	\$27,233	46
2002	444	7,092	\$27,445	50
2003	443	7,043	\$26,684	60

Source: Stats Indiana (demographics of federal statistics from US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

**=Adjusted for inflation*

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Table 4.4 shows the distribution of jobs by category with the average wage, number of jobs, number of establishments, and the percent of the total of jobs in Hart County for 2003. The data presented in this table supports earlier discussion identifying the higher paying sectors as Professional/Technical Services, Information and Utilities, sectors conventionally focused on modern technology and commercial production services. The data also confirms the lowest paying sectors are conventionally hourly rate positions that are reserved for second wage earners, teenagers or as second jobs.

Table 4-4: Hart County Wages by Industry - 2003

Industry	Establishments	Jobs	Avg. Wage	% in County
Total 2003	443	7,043	\$26,684	100
Professional /Technical	1	57	\$50,942	0.8
Information	8	113	\$48,305	1.6
Utilities	4	169	\$44,708	2.4
Transportation/Warehousing	3	35	\$37,379	0.5
Manufacturing	35	2,174	\$33,776	30.9
Finance, Insurance	24	129	\$32,990	1.8
Private	407	5,862	\$26,627	83.2
Education Services	11	602	\$26,180	8.5
Public Administration	11	130	\$26,033	1.8
Construction	71	382	\$20,877	5.4
Waste Management	16	265	\$18,329	3.8
Real Estate	6	23	\$15,950	0.3
Retail Trade	84	875	\$15,353	12.4
Other	31	113	\$14,613	1.6
Arts/ Recreation	7	121	\$14,008	1.7
Food Service	26	393	\$8,119	5.6

Source: Stats Indiana (demographics of federal statistics from US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Overall the trends show positive indicators for Finance/Insurance, Professional, Transportation, and Information (no data on 1990), areas where Hart County has seen a growth in the number of higher paying sector jobs. Manufacturing is the only higher paying sector that has been losing jobs in the past decade. This information will be critical when addressing the types of jobs the County desires to encourage.

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4.2 Labor Force Characteristics

Information concerning the skills and abilities of the labor force provides a strong indication of the economic potential of a region. Occupational characteristics highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the available labor pool, offering guidance as to the employment needs and limitations. An analysis of occupational employment, balanced by information concerning work location and commuting patterns, can be used to determine the assets of the existing labor force as well as to highlight which skills should be brought into the area. This type of analysis can then be used in conjunction with the economic base study to direct activities for improving the local economic conditions.

Employment by Occupation

The occupational information reveals the kinds of skills & experience present in the local labor force, and provides an indication of how successfully that force can fill the labor needs of particular industrial sectors. Such information can also help explain commuting patterns, education needs, and possible changes in demands for consumer goods and services.

Table 4-5: Employment by Occupation - 2000

	Elbert	Franklin	Hart	Madison	Georgia
Employed Civilian Population	8,733	9,007	10,409	12,498	3,839,756
Management, Professional & Related	20.4%	24.0%	24.6%	21.9%	32.7%
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	32.3%	25.1%	23.9%	22.7%	15.7%
Sales & Office	23.4%	22.6%	23.2%	25.5%	26.8%
Construction, Extraction, Maintenance	11.3%	11.6%	14.0%	17.3%	10.8%
Service	11.5%	15.1%	13.2%	11.7%	13.4%
Farming, Fishing, Forestry	1.1%	1.7%	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%

Source: US Census

Mirroring the characteristics and trends implied in the economic base analyses, Hart County exhibits comparably high figures for blue-collar occupational skills. Most notably among the Construction, Extraction, Maintenance and Service categories where either neighboring communities or the State as a whole exhibit lower shares of employees. This is balanced with comparably high shares of employees within the Management, Professional & Related category, and the overall picture is not as polarized as the statistics show for the State.

This does support the concept that Hart County's economy is shifting towards a Service Base, and the labor force is adjusting. This does not suggest the trend is directed or positive, however, and should the share of employees within the Service and Sales & Office categories continue to grow combined with the trends outlined above, that would indicate a general decline in the overall economic value of local industries.

Part of the trends within the labor force may be the result of/indicate issues with education levels. Table 4-6 shows the education of the labor force in the Hart County area and provides some insight into the correlation between education levels, occupational skills and earned wages. This data shows that the percent of the population in the labor force that did not graduate high school is basically the same for all age groups with the exception of 65+. The same is observed for the high school graduates. Higher paying job opportunities, even in manufacturing, are

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requiring more than a high school education. For the 69% of the labor force at a high school or lower education level, the job opportunities in higher paying jobs are limited. This data may also be interpreted that those Hart area citizens that have more than a high school education are forced to move out of the area to find gainful employment opportunities.

Table 4-6: Educational Attainment by Age Group, Hart County Area* - 2000

	Age Group					
	Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-65	65+
Not HS Grad.	30.7%	29.9%	21.4%	23.1%	29.6%	49.8%
HS Graduate	38.7%	39%	39.8%	43.5%	41.3%	28%
Some College/ Assoc. Deg.	20.3%	28.2%	25.3%	21.8%	18.7%	12.2%
Bachelors Degree	6.5%	2.7%	10%	6.8%	5.5%	6.6%
Graduate/ Prof. Degree	3.8%	0.1%	3.6%	4.8%	4.9%	3.4%

Source: Ga. Department of Labor

** = Hart, Elbert, Franklin and Madison Counties*

The percentage of the labor force that has some college and/or associates degree is higher in the younger population ranges. This is a positive indicator where today's higher paying job opportunities are requiring some advanced education. This data could be showing that there are opportunities for higher paying jobs in the Hart area for those residents that obtain some advanced education, and that younger workers are recognizing the need for a higher education.

The percentage of the labor force with a bachelor's degree is highest in the 25-34 Age Group. This could be indicative that some jobs that require this level of education are available for more experienced workers in the Hart area such as management level jobs or the growing health care sector. Similar observations and conclusions could be drawn about the more advance graduate and professional level degrees.

Unemployment Levels

Another lead indicator of an economy's strength is the measure of its unemployment levels. Trends in this area reflect the stability and prosperity of local industries, as well as the results of past economic development strategies. Unemployment levels also represent a measure of the poverty level within the area and potential deficiencies in the redistribution of wealth.

While Hart County's unemployment rate has remained traditionally above the unemployment rate for the United States and for Georgia, a comparison with surrounding Georgia counties has mixed results. A large part of this is due to notion that Hart County is not considered a regional center for employment or commerce, and therefore is more susceptible to outside trends and influences. Unemployment levels will stabilize at a figure comparable to that for the State as the County grows in overall population and as the nearby metropolitan expansions introduce more and more suburban activities to the Hart county area.

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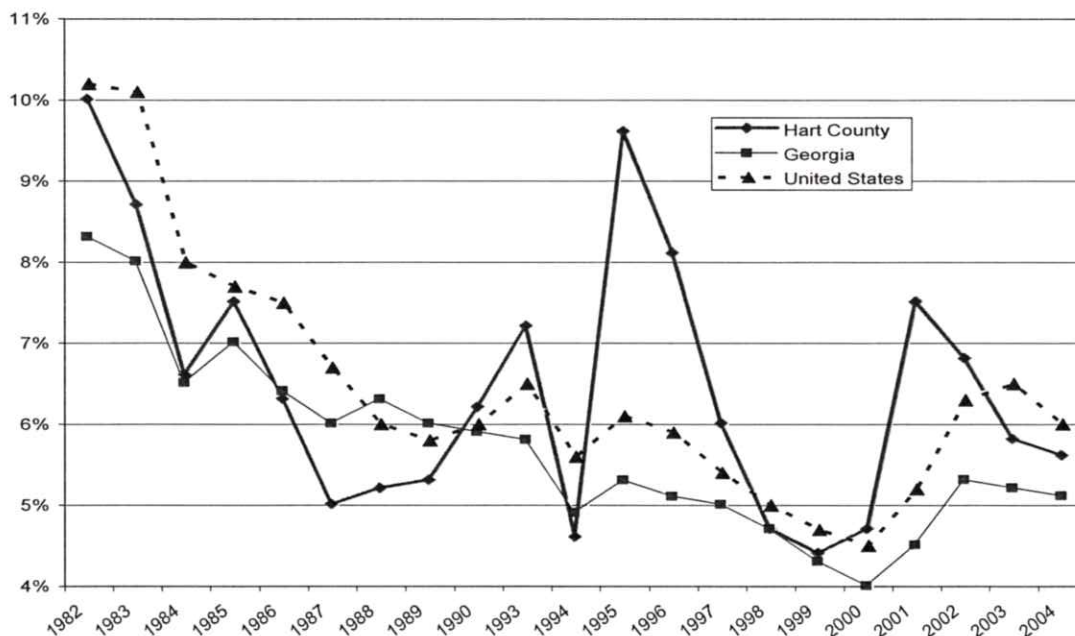
Table 4-7: Unemployment Rates

	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
United States	5.5%	5.6%	4.0%	4.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.5%
Georgia	5.4%	4.8%	3.5%	4.0%	4.8%	4.7%	4.6%
Hart County	5.7%	9.1%	4.2%	7.0%	6.3%	5.3%	5.1%
Franklin	7.6%	5.4%	3.3%	5.1%	4.5%	4.5%	4.2%
Elbert County	7.8%	8.0%	7.4%	7.1%	6.6%	6.6%	5.8%
Madison County	6.6%	3.6%	2.7%	3.8%	3.7%	3.7%	3.7%

Source: US Department of Labor

A review of Hart County's unemployment rates reveals noticeable spikes that mark the changes to the local economy and signal the movement towards suburbanization and a more service based economy. These spikes parallel significant plant closures in Hart County: A few hundred jobs lost from a plant closure has a significant impact on the Hart County unemployment rate because of the relative small workforce. The recent announcement (2005) of three plant closures in Hart County may drive the Hart County unemployment rate into the double digits in 2006. Combined with the other economic indicators, the fact that periodic spikes in unemployment have been the apparent norm in Hart County indicates a drastic need to analyze and reformulate the economic development strategy of the County to stabilize the local economy and work force opportunities.

Figure 4.1: Hart County Historical Unemployment Rate



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Commuting Patterns

One significant struggle with accommodating both residential and industrial needs lies in the effective use of regional infrastructure. The rapid development of modern transportation and infrastructure improvements has led to drastic changes in the commute to work and the unemployment patterns discussed above. The same modes of transit that may easily bring people and commerce into an area can just as easily take them away. This creates a governmental concern over the commuting patterns and increased interdependence among communities. An imbalance between needs for employment and availability of employees can lead to increases in commuting, leading to a disparity in the provision of governmental services.

The data presented in Table 4-8 shows the historical commuting patterns for *residents living in* Hart County. This data shows that the percentage of the work force of Hart County residents working in Hart County increased from 1980 to 1990 but then dropped in 2000. The largest out of county commute is to Franklin County. The percentage and number of Hart County working residents commuting to Franklin County increased from 1990 to 2000. This indicates that more job opportunities were available in Franklin County than in Hart County during this period. The percentage of Hart County working residents commuting to Anderson SC decreased from 1980 to 1990 apparently due to the increase in local job opportunities as evidenced in the Hart County employed percentage of 1990.

Table 4-8: Commuting Patterns of Hart County Residents

Destination	1980	1990	2000	
			%	Total
Hart Co. GA	60.0%	71.3%	65.9%	6,768
Franklin Co. GA	14.0%	12.5%	16.2%	1,669
Elbert Co. GA	4.0%	3.3%	3.6%	371
Anderson Co. SC	7.0%	3.9%	3.4%	346
Clarke Co. GA	2.0%	3.0%	2.6%	272
Stephens Co. GA	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%	210
Other (each less than 1%)	12%	4.2%	6.2%	639

Source: US Bureau of Census

Table 4-9 shows the commuting data for *people working in* Hart County. The 2000 data indicates that 76% of the workers in Hart County reside in Hart County, a percentage that has steadily decreased in the past two decades. This leads to the conclusion that a higher percentage of Hart County residents must commute out of county for employment and further reinforces that less local employment opportunities are available for Hart County residents. However it is also important to look at the numbers and other factors behind these percentages. The number of Hart County residents that worked within Hart County has increased from 4,525 employees in 1980 to 6,768 employees in 2000. Therefore the number of employment opportunities has steadily increased over the past two decades. This shows that jobs are being produced in Hart County, yet they are either not at the right quantity or the right type of job to keep pace with the needs of the Hart County residents.

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Table 4-9: Commuting Patterns of Hart County Employees

Destination	1980	1990	2000	
			%	Total
Hart Co. GA	84%	81.9%	76.0%	6,768
Elbert Co. GA	3%	6.2%	7.9%	700
Franklin Co. GA	7%	6.3%	7.2%	638
Anderson Co. SC	2%	1.8%	2.9%	262
Madison Co. GA	1%	1.2%	1.2%	106
Stephens Co. GA	1%	0.8%	1.1%	101
Other (each less than 1%)	2%	1.8%	3.7%	329

Source: US Bureau of Census

Another factor to consider is that many people may be choosing to live in Hart County due to the lake and other quality of life factors while retaining employment outside the county. Given its close proximity to the metropolitan areas discussed earlier, Hart County may be evolving into a “bedroom” community for places like Anderson, SC and Athens, GA. This needs to be monitored as these MSA areas grow and become more of an influence to Hart County.

4.3 Economic Development Resources

Many communities employ a number of methods to encourage and strengthen local business and economic conditions. Economic development resources can take the form of development agencies, government programs, or special features within an education system that foster desired business environments. These resources are created/maintained as a means of supporting the local economy, and as such become strong factors in the analysis of regional economic development patterns.

Post-Secondary Education and Training Facilities

- Hart County is served by two technical colleges in adjacent counties: North Georgia Tech and Athens Tech. The Gateway Industrial Park (see Map 4.2) is served by North Georgia Tech’s newest campus south of Toccoa, Ga. Athens Tech has several satellite campuses near Hart County. The technical colleges “Quick Start” training program has been a very important incentive that Hart County has used to recruit and retain new and existing businesses into the County.
- The Hart County High School has vocational programs and regularly works with the local Chamber and Development Authorities to devise curricula appropriate to the skill-sets demanded of employers today.
- Hart County recently added a large addition to the Hart County library in Hartwell GA to house the Hart County literacy center that provides some job training and retraining programs.

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- Hart County is also in close proximity to other colleges and universities including Clemson University (SC), Anderson College (SC), the University of Georgia, Main Campus (Athens, GA), Truet McConnell College, Emanuel College (Franklin Springs GA), Toccoa Falls College (Toccoa, GA).

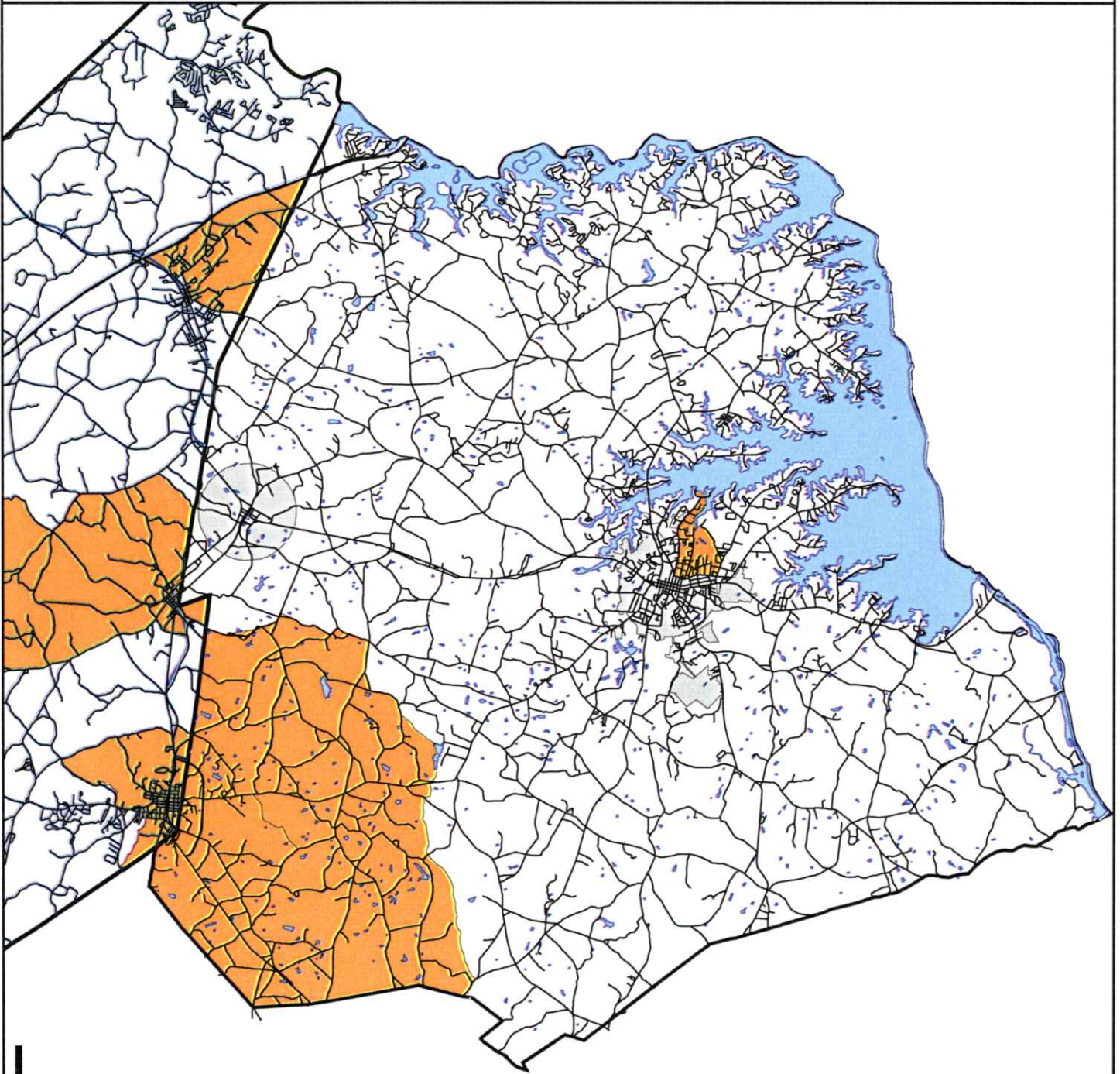
Other Resources and Programs

Hart County has pursued incentives and developed other assets that are important tools in recruiting and retaining industry. Recently Hart County has secured an Employment Incentive Program grant that provided several hundreds of thousands of dollars for establishing a revolving loan fund. The proceeds were initially awarded to a local company for expanding their business and retaining jobs. As this money is paid back to Hart County, with interest, the money will be loaned to another industry and continue to be a tool that can help attract and retain industry.

Hart County does employ local incentives such as tax abatement and SPLOST infrastructure commitments to promote new industry. In addition, Hart County has been successful in securing State grants for economic development and has several State incentive programs available such as Freeport exemptions and job tax credits.









One resource Hart County is planning to pursue aggressively is the fact that a section of the County is located in the Federal and State identified Empowerment (or Opportunity) Zone. These areas have been identified as two or more adjacent census tracts where the more than 20% of the population is below the poverty level (see Map 4.3). As a result of this, the State and Federal Government consider these areas a higher priority in competition for grant funds for infrastructure and economic development. In addition the State allows extra incentives such as additional job tax credits to industries that locate or expand in these zones. Currently the Franklin County portion of the Gateway Industrial Park is located in an Empowerment Zone. However, Hart County will be applying for the entire industrial park to be eligible for empowerment zone opportunities.

Map 4-3 Hart County Area Empowerment Zones



0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Legend

-  GDOT 2005 Roads
-  Railroad
-  Rivers & Streams
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  County Boundary
-  Franklin County Opportunity Zones
-  Hart County Opportunity Zones
-  Municipalities

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4.4 County Labor Force Estimates and Projections

Table 4.10 provides recent labor force estimates for Hart and surrounding counties. Approximately 45,000 persons comprise the area labor force. Each county in Table 4.10 has witnessed a growth in the labor force with the exception of Hart County. Based on the data presented in this table, the labor force in Hart County appears to have shrunk 14%.

Table 4-10: Labor Force

County	1990	1994	2003	Change '90-03
Elbert	8,675	8,794	9,709	12%
Franklin	9,252	9,236	11,360	23%
Hart	10,989	9,600	9,496	-14%
Madison	10,999	11,511	14,045	28%
Total	39,915	39,141	44,610	12%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor & 1995 Hart County Comp Plan

The labor force change does not correlate with the population growth observed in Hart County from 1990 to 2000 (16.7% population growth). This may be indicative of the population growth associated with the retirement community where the retirees are not a part of the labor force but are contributing to the population growth. Another conclusion is that the number of job opportunities for Hart County residents is shrinking and the residents that would be part of the labor force have to find employment outside of Hart County. The 1995 comp plan projected the civilian labor force in Hart County to increase only modestly from 10,719 in 1991 to 12,255 in the year 2015. However based on the data in Table 4-10 a prediction on labor force for 2015 would be difficult because the data indicates a reduction in the labor force rather than a growing labor force.

If new jobs are created in Hart County then the labor force would be expected to grow to match the need for filling these jobs. If the job opportunities decline in the planning period then the labor force would be expected to contract.

The 1995 comp plan targeted specific labor force age groups correlating that data with population projections. The plan recognized limitations of targeted age group labor force projections especially in light of the fact that the civilian labor force for workers 45 years and over may be larger than normal in Hart County because many of the older persons in (or moving into) Hart County that are retired and semi-retired persons. This is an important demographic further explored in the population section of this plan due to the fact that the County enjoys 220 miles of lakeshore that is attracting retirees.

New higher paying industries (employers) will need to be recruited to locate in Hart County to persuade the younger workers to remain in the local area. Another implication of the labor force projections is that, with an aging labor force, new jobs geared toward the ability of older workers will be needed. Local sentiments continue to be that Hart County needs new jobs to keep the young people here, and that if jobs are increased, the younger age group segments of the work force will increase in number.